

SPSO decision report

Case: 201800189, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sector: health
Subject: failure to send ambulance / delay in sending ambulance
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her father (Mr A) that the ambulance service unreasonably failed to dispatch an emergency ambulance. Mr A collapsed at work with a stroke and two calls were made for an ambulance, which took 50 minutes to arrive. Mrs C felt that the call handler who took the first call had not established sufficient information to determine whether Mr A was conscious or not, and that this affected the priority status of the ambulance response.

We took independent advice from a paramedic. We found that both phone calls were graded appropriately in view of the questions asked by the call handlers. However, in the first call it was not clearly established whether Mr A was conscious or not. Good practice would have been for the first call handler to have questioned the caller in more detail, which would have established an accurate consciousness level and may have affected the grading of the ambulance response. We upheld the complaint.

Recommendations